

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. An anti-slip step comprising:
 - (a.) a metal tread plate with a top surface and a bottom surface, said tread plate having a plurality of drain holes extending therethrough;
 - (b.) a plurality of grip structures extending upwardly from the top surface of the tread plate; and
 - (c.) an electrical resistance heater disposed proximate to the tread plate and operable to heat the step so as to melt any snow or ice that may be present on the step.
2. The anti-slip step of claim 1, wherein the anti-slip step further comprises a plurality of drain structures extending downwardly from the bottom surface of the tread plate, said drain structures at least partially defining the drain holes.
3. The anti-slip step of claim 2, wherein each drain structure comprises a plurality of spaced-apart tabs.
4. The anti-slip step of claim 3, wherein the tabs of the drain structures are joined to the tread plate.
5. The anti-slip step of claim 2, wherein each of the grip structures at least partially defines a hole extending through the tread plate.
6. The anti-slip step of claim 5, wherein each of the grip structures comprises:
 - a base having a continuous, curved side wall that is joined to the tread plate; and
 - a plurality of spaced-apart tabs joined to the base and extending upwardly therefrom.
7. The anti-slip step of claim 1, wherein the grip structures are arranged in at least two rows and the drain holes are arranged in at least one

row, and wherein the at least one row of the drain holes is disposed between the at least two rows of the grip structures.

8. The anti-slip step of claim 7, wherein the at least one row of the drain holes and the at least two rows of the grip structures are all parallel to each other.

9. The anti-slip step of claim 1, further comprising a front flange joined to a front side portion of the tread plate and extending downwardly therefrom, and wherein the heater is secured to the front flange.

10. The anti-slip step of claim 9, further comprising:
a rear flange joined to a rear side portion of the tread plate and extending downwardly therefrom; and
a second electrical resistance heater secured to the rear flange.

11. The anti-slip step of claim 1, wherein the heater is secured to the bottom surface of the tread plate.

12. The anti-slip step of claim 1, wherein the heater is a thick film heater formed over the bottom surface of the tread plate.

13. The anti-slip step of claim 1, wherein the tread plate is composed of aluminum.

14. A vehicle comprising;
(a.) a chassis;
(b.) a plurality of wheels mounted to the chassis;
(c.) an operator compartment supported on the chassis;
(d.) a battery for providing power to the vehicle;
(e.) a metal step for supporting an operator of the vehicle when the operator enters or leaves the operator compartment, said step being disposed proximate to the operator compartment and including a tread plate and an electrical resistance heater disposed proximate to the tread plate; and

(f.) an electrical circuit connecting the heater to the battery, said electrical circuit being operable to supply power from the battery to the heater, thereby causing the heater to heat the step and melt any snow or ice that may be present on the step.

15. The vehicle of claim 14, wherein the tread plate has a plurality of drain holes extending therethrough, and wherein the step further comprises a plurality of grip structures extending upwardly from a top surface of the tread plate.

16. The vehicle of claim 15, wherein the step further comprises a plurality of drain structures extending downwardly from a bottom surface of the tread plate, said drain structures at least partially defining the drain holes.

17. The vehicle of claim 14, wherein the step further comprises a front flange joined to a front side portion of the tread plate and extending downwardly therefrom, and wherein the heater is secured to the front flange.

18. The vehicle of claim 17, wherein the step further comprises:
a rear flange joined to a rear side portion of the tread plate and extending downwardly therefrom; and
a second electrical resistance heater secured to the rear flange.

19. The vehicle of claim 14, wherein the heater is secured to a bottom surface of the tread plate.

20. The vehicle of claim 14, wherein the heater is a thick film heater formed over a bottom surface of the tread plate.

21. The vehicle of claim 14, wherein the electrical circuit includes a temperature switch that controls the supply of power to the heater.

22. The vehicle of claim 14, wherein the electrical circuit includes a manual switch that controls the supply of power to the heater, said switch being disposed in the operator compartment of the vehicle.

23. A heated step assembly for a vehicle, said assembly comprising:

(a.) a battery;

(b.) a step for supporting an operator of the vehicle, said step including:

a metal tread plate with a top surface and a bottom surface, said tread plate having a plurality of drain holes extending therethrough;

a plurality of grip structures extending upwardly from the top surface of the tread plate; and

an electrical resistance heater disposed proximate to the tread plate; and

(c.) an electrical circuit connecting the heater to the battery, said electrical circuit being operable to supply power from the battery to the heater, thereby causing the heater to heat the step and melt any snow or ice that may be present on the step.

24. The heated step assembly of claim 23, wherein the step further comprises a plurality of drain structures extending downwardly from the bottom surface of the tread plate, said drain structures at least partially defining the drain holes.

25. The heated step assembly of claim 24, wherein the step further comprises a front flange joined to a front side portion of the tread plate and extending downwardly therefrom, and wherein the heater is secured to the front flange.

26. The heated step assembly of claim 24, wherein the heater is secured to the bottom surface of the tread plate.

27. The heated step assembly of claim 23, wherein the heater is a thick film heater formed over the bottom surface of the tread plate.